

Speech of Hon. Wm. S. Barry, of Miss. de-
livered in the House of Rep. 1854.

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CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS TOLERATION.

SPEECH

OF

HON. WILLIAM S. BARRY, OF MISS.,

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, DECEMBER 18, 1854.

The House being in the Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union—

Mr. BARRY said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I propose to offer some remarks upon a subject which has, for months past, occupied a large share of public attention. That subject is, in common parlance, called Know-Nothingism. Opinions the opposite of those I entertain have already been avowed here; and I seize the opportunity, which I did not before enjoy, of declaring my own.

This society, or association, known by the name of "Know-Nothings," is one which has recently sprung into existence. Its founders are unknown; its purposes are unknown, because the purposes avowed by those who are supposed to belong to it—by those advocating it—are contradictory in their character. These are to be deduced, not from authorized avowals of those acknowledged to belong to the society, but they are to be gathered by scraps, collected here and there from the declarations of those who are suspected of being members, or who have incidentally acquired information. It is not like other political organizations here, avowing principles, and meeting and daring the responsibility of the avowal. It is not like other associations, which having principles believed to be of vital importance to the country, their members are willing to declare those principles, and to stand or fall with them. If, then, in attempting to find out the purposes of this order, I shall do injustice to it—if I shall ascribe to it that which its advocates deny, let members upon this floor, if there be such belonging to the order, rise and correct me. I shall be willing to be supplied with the information—more willing, perhaps, than they will be to give it.

This association appeals to that which is strong in every country. It appeals to that feeling of nationality without which a nation cannot exist as an independent Government, but which, at the

same time, when kindled and maddened, may destroy all that is good in government, and subvert the very principles on which it was established. There is no nation in the world—and the more intellectual, socially and politically, the nation is, the less ready it will be to entertain the prejudice—I say that there is no nation upon earth in which this prejudice against foreigners and foreign population cannot be aroused; and the most beautiful and soothing effect of civilization, the loveliest influence of our own institutions, has been to mollify this prejudice against those outside our borders, and to bring the whole family of nations, as it were, into a common brotherhood. According to the degree of a nation's civilization, according as it is high, or low, you will, as a general rule, find this prejudice and hostility to foreigners. In proportion as a nation is elevated in its consciousness of power, and in its knowledge of the high duties of civilization, will it receive and treat with respect those who spring from a foreign soil, or are reared under the influence of different ideas; and as it sinks in the scale of self-respect and civilization, in the same degree do you find this prejudice; and as a nation is possessed of a rabble instead of a people, it will be seen that its fury can be aroused against all who cannot pronounce its Shibboleth.

One of the most frequent justifications of this organization, Mr. Chairman—the one which I have heard alluded to here and elsewhere—is that there are secret associations of foreigners which must be counteracted in this manner. If such political associations exist among the foreign population of this country, it certainly seems a strange method to rebuke the error by forming other associations, in which are embodied all that is wrong in those we condemn. We give dignity and consequence to their conduct by imitating it, and lose all the advantage of honest principles by leveling our own conduct to the standard of those we reprobate. If the foreigners have adopted rules of action incompatible either with social

order or political rights, there can be no duty more consistent with pure philanthropy or elevated patriotism, than the attempt to correct their error, and infuse into their minds juster views of the duties of the citizen, both to his neighbor and to the State. We have adopted the humane and tolerant opinion of Mr. Jefferson, the great apostle of the Democratic party, and who infused into it that generous and trusting faith in man, whether native or alien born, which has been the germ of the chief differences between the two great parties of the country, "*That little is to be feared from error, while reason is left free to combat it.*" The evils that we see are not to be cured by persecution; the faggot and the stake are exploded arguments; and having discarded the more open, manly, and responsible instruments of torture, we will not now turn to seize upon those which are secret, sinister, and irresponsible.

A few Germans, so goes the story, have formed an association whose purpose is, among other heterodox things, to abolish the Christian Sabbath, and straightway the alarm is given, and men who never seemed to care for Protestantism before, have become disturbed. We have a body of Christians, numerous, zealous, and devout; we have a press, able, skillful, and ever ready; we have a clergy, watchful, learned, and pious; and more than all, we have a Revelation on which, as on a rock, is based the institution of the Christian Sabbath; yet neither, nor all of these is thought sufficient to save the Sabbath from the assaults of a few nameless foreigners, and the aid of the civil authority is invoked to devise some policy by which the tide of German infidelity may be stayed. That remedy is worthy of Rome herself three hundred years ago. It is to disfranchise three millions of people, to reverse the policy of the freest Government on earth, and while there are indications of progress in every nation of the civilized world, to present ours as the only one which is going backward. If the efforts of a few hundred foreigners can put Christianity in peril, it has a feeble hold upon the human heart, and is less closely interwoven with the wants and principles of our nature than I had supposed.

There have been meetings held publicly in New York city, and, doubtless, will be again, where the Bible, the Church, and the whole scheme of Christianity have been denounced and held up to reprobation. These meetings were composed of native-born citizens, and yet no remedy has been proposed for the evil which required the disfranchisement of all native-born citizens on account of the insane vagaries of a few, or which struck at the root of the dearest privileges of the citizen, to eradicate a transient, though crying evil. The Boston Investigator has for years avowed and advocated principles utterly at war with Christianity; yet, no body of men that I know of, has leagued together, by solemn oaths, to disfranchise the editor or his readers of their civil rights. The Unitarianism prevalent in and about Boston is as little acceptable to the great body of Christians in this country as Catholicism; but the truly noble tolerance of the people has not thought it just or politic to attempt the extinction of heresy or infidelity by imposing civil disabilities. The best, the only proper, remedy for erroneous opinion, is argument and truth, offered in the spirit of respect and kindness; and a party which, in a free coun-

try, attempts to drive men by secret or open proscription, and to punish freedom of thought by covert assaults of intolerance, can achieve only a temporary success, and escape for but a little while the condemnation which enlightened men visit upon every form of persecution. Wherever thought is free it will run riot in error. The great truths which the consent of man has adopted, are but grains of wheat winnowed from bushels of chaff. It is only by the widest excursions of thought that the treasures of the universe are garnered, and the vagaries of error are often suggestive of the finest discoveries of truth. Your freedom and mine, Mr. Chairman, to *think right*, rest upon the same guarantees as the German's right to *think wrong*. His right to the *abuse* of his freedom of thought cannot be assailed through the medium of law, or the more criminal agency of a secret oath-bound association without periling our right to the *proper* use of our freedom.

Secret political associations have heretofore existed in oppressed countries, for enlarging the rights of the citizens, and limiting the powers of rulers; but, this is the first, so far as my reading extends, in which the effort has been made, through such an organization, to narrow the liberty of man, and graft an oppressive principle upon the Government. There has been a strong repugnance to these political associations in this country from the earliest period of our history. The society of the Cincinnati, formed immediately after the Revolution, and composed of men fresh from the baptism of fire and blood in that holy struggle, has decayed, and almost expired, under the distrust felt by the American people of secret associations, which might be wielded to the detriment of the public liberty, or to serve the ambitious purposes of those who would make the association the instrument of their own advancement. The times are not so improved, nor men grown so patriotic, that a power which was denied by public opinion to the best patriots of the purest days of the Revolution, can safely be intrusted to the hands of those who can show no peculiar claim, either of service or purity, to special confidence.

But, sir, the purposes of this order and its organization are distinct. The end to be accomplished and the instruments may be dissimilar and inconsistent. When the advocates of this religious and political intolerance talk to me of securing the independence of our country, of having our character truly American, of rejecting utterly all foreign influence and dictation, though I have been deluded with the belief that we have long enjoyed all these blessings, still my heart glows as I listen to these patriotic sentiments, urged with such warmth and eloquence; but when I ask for the means of effecting these desirable ends, and am pointed to a secret political association which the traditions of our fathers, yet glowing with the life-blood of the Revolution, and the instincts of my republican nature, and the creed of the Democratic party whose truths I have been taught to act upon and to revere, all warn me to shun; when I am urged to join in proscribing one portion of my fellow-citizens because of their birth, and another because of their religious opinions, I naturally inquire, can the purpose of those be good who employ such means for its accomplishment? I am far from charging upon the

advocates of Know-Nothingism any wish to inflict evil upon their country; yet they are justly to be held responsible for all the consequences, moral, social, and political, which flow from their doctrines.

Thus, Mr. Chairman, two distinct questions are presented in examining this subject—first, the purposes which the order has in view; and secondly, the means by which they are to be accomplished.

These purposes, as gathered from supposed members, from newspapers professing to advocate the views of the order, and from the writings and speeches of those affecting to sympathize with it, are—

First. The exclusion of all foreigners from office.

Second. The extension of the term of naturalization from five to twenty-one years, or some other period longer than five years.

Third. The entire repeal of the naturalization laws.

Fourthly. The exclusion of Roman Catholics from office.

The means by which these things are to be accomplished, are a secret political association, in which the members are bound by the most solemn oaths to obedience, to silence, and to mutual fidelity.

I shall speak, first, of the organization, and then of the purposes the order has in view.

I can but believe that a secret political association is dangerous to the rights of the people and to the stability of the Government. In a free Government, where every man is entitled to declare his opinions, and there is no punishment for the avowal of whatever doctrines he may entertain, what excuse can there be for a resort to secrecy? When the people are oppressed by a tyrannical Government, and the penalty of death awaits every man who dares to speak or think against the power that is crushing him, there may indeed be an excuse for patriots scheming in the darkness of midnight, and in the security of unknown places of meeting; but, in the midst of a people who enjoy every liberty that the most liberal institutions can bestow, where freedom of thought, of speech, of action, and of the press, are the birth-right of every man, how can a secret proscriptive organization be allowed to take root, and rights, the dearest that man can exercise, or Government protect, be taken from the people by means so insidious and so fruitful of danger?

The Constitution allows no oaths to be forced upon the voter, nor tests to be imposed in the use of that franchise. The sense of duty and the personal stake of each man in the welfare of the community were thought sufficient to insure its faithful exercise. But this secret association attempts to bind men by the most stringent oaths to exercise the right of voting only as certain native patriots shall determine, in the secrecy, and perhaps in the darkness, of midnight. The citizen who assumes these oaths and obligations parts with his individual freedom, abandons his personal independence, and comes to the polls, not an untrammelled voter, but a mere machine to carry out, by his suffrage, the elections and the purposes which others—perhaps against his consent—have determined on. He barter away his freedom who makes any pledges or swears any oaths which impair his right to modify his ticket at any time prior to depositing it in the ballot-box. The electoral franchise is one which is conferred on each individual

who exercises it, and which he has no right to trammel the free, judicious use of, by private oaths and secret combinations; and his duty is to his country and the Constitution, not to midnight caucuses of ambitious and crafty men, who glaze over their schemes of selfishness with well affected anxiety for the public good.

It is not to be supposed that an order so extensive and numerous as the Know-Nothings could exist a great while without a revelation or betrayal of its secrets, despite the strenuous efforts made to preserve them. A publication was made a few weeks since, in the Boston Post, of the constitution, ritual, &c., of the order in the State of Massachusetts, and those of other States are believed, so far as they have been revealed, to be essentially alike. A witness, who was being examined in a court of justice in Massachusetts, was asked if he belonged to the order, and after much equivocation, he admitted it, and being asked further, if the publication in the Post was an authentic copy of the records of the order, he replied that it was. Thus we have reliable information as to the method of initiation into the order, the signs, pass-words, &c., the oaths the members take, and the purposes they have in view.

I have here the oath of the candidate for admission into the second degree council, as given, and, so far as I know, uncontradicted, in the Pennsylvania, extra, of October 6. It is as follows:

"Obligation.—You, and each of you, of your own free will and accord, in the presence of Almighty God and these witnesses, your right hand resting on this Holy Bible and Cross, and your left hand raised toward heaven, or, if it be preferred, your left hand resting on your breast, and your right hand raised toward heaven, in token of your sincerity, do solemnly promise and swear, that you will not make known, to any person or persons, any of the signs, secrets, mysteries, or objects of this organization, unless it be to those whom, after due examination, or lawful information, you shall find to be members of this organization, in good standing; that you will not cut, carve, print, paint, stamp, stain, or in any way, directly or indirectly, expose any of the secrets or objects of this order, nor suffer it to be done by others, if in your power to prevent it, unless it be for official instruction; that so long as you are connected with this organization, if not regularly dismissed from it, you will, in all things, *political or social*, so far as this order is concerned, comply with the will of the majority, when expressed in lawful manner, though it may conflict with your personal preference, so long as it does not conflict with the grand, State, or subordinate constitutions, the Constitution of the United States of America, or that of the State in which you reside; and that you will not, under any circumstances whatever, knowingly recommend an unworthy person for initiation, nor suffer it to be done, if in your power to prevent it. You furthermore promise and declare, that you will not vote nor give your influence for any man for any office in the gift of the people, unless he be an American-born citizen, in favor of Americans-born ruling America; nor if he be a Roman Catholic; and that you will not, under any circumstances, *expose the name of any member of this order, nor reveal the existence of such an organization.* To all the foregoing you bind yourselves, under the no less penalty than that of being expelled from this order, and of having your name posted and circulated throughout the different councils of the United States, as a perjurer, and as a traitor to God and your country, as being *unfit to be employed and trusted, countenanced, or supported in any business transaction,* as a person totally unworthy the confidence of all good men, and as one at whom the finger of scorn should ever be pointed. So help you God!" (Each answers, "I do.")

There are several things in this oath well calculated to excite the apprehension of judicious, conscientious men. 'Tis easy to perceive in how many instances it may happen that adherence to it will conflict with a member's duty as a citizen.

It may very frequently occur that a member may be required to testify in a court of justice of his own membership, as in the instance before alluded to, which arose in Massachusetts, in which the witness endured the most painful and harassing struggles of mind in determining where the obligation of duty lay, whether to obey the oath taken before the court, or the one sworn in a midnight association; which claim was paramount, that of his country, to whom he owed duty and allegiance from his birth, or that of a secret proscriptive society, which had entangled him with oaths, and digged pitfalls about him for his conscience. Has a citizen the moral right, and if he has the right, is it a worthy and judicious use of it thus to perplex his sense of duty by assuming, unnecessarily, vows of the most solemn character, and which he cannot disregard even in obedience to that higher and more ancient duty which rests upon us all, without incurring the censure, and, perhaps, the punishment of those with whom he had associated? In my judgment, sir, a man who is a member of an established Government, from which he receives the amplest protection of person and property, and to which, in return, he owes the amplest measure of fidelity and obedience, has not the moral right to take such an oath as that I have quoted. He may as well owe allegiance to a foreign sovereign, and be ready to obey his commands, as assume obligations to any society of his countrymen which place him in collision with his own Government. So plain, and almost self-evident is this truth, that a year since no one in this country could have been found to question it, as no one will a year or two hence, when this bubble, with its tints that delude some eyes, shall have passed into oblivion, with its elder brothers, the alien and sedition laws, and the public mind, swayed from its self-poised equilibrium by a temporary excitement, shall have recovered its just position.

Many who have joined this association, under the best of the thousand inducements by which good men have been seduced into a connection with it, when they come to estimate calmly and justly the false position in which they have placed themselves, will do, as thousands of others have done already, abandon it; and feeling that the laws and the Constitution of their country are a safer measure of public duty, and surer guardians of public right, and honor, and interest, than the murky resolves of any association that ever adopted persecution for its creed, and an irresponsible secrecy for its means, can be, they will renew their open associations with their fellow-citizens, and abjure thenceforth, as the worst enemies of freedom, all political organizations which employ oaths, or secrecy, or persecution. An oath such as this it is culpable to *take*, but it is far more culpable to *execute* it. An oath to do wrong, to violate a known duty, sworn to in excitement or heedlessness, it is safer for the soul manfully to abjure, than, under the delusive promptings of arrogance and pride, to persist in its completion.

The oath provides that the member shall "not, under any circumstances, expose the name of any member of this order, nor reveal the existence of such an organization." This portion of the oath, perhaps, explains why those not in the order have never met a man who confessed that he belonged to it. And, sir, we have heard

men deny connection with it, whom we have every reason to be satisfied were members. Has any man the right to take an oath binding himself to the continuous statement of an untruth. Can that institution be good whose first fruits are thus evil? No, sir; it is wrong, radically wrong. Nor can the guilt of the deception be escaped by the flimsy evasion that the real name of the order is not "Know-Nothing," and that, consequently, a man may safely say he does not belong to one of that name, though he really is connected with the order which the public have designated by that title, and he well knows it is the one alluded to by the inquirer. Since his intention is to deceive, he is responsible for the deceit. Nor can he escape by the plea that the querist has no right to put the question, and that he is, therefore, at liberty to disregard the truth in his answer. It is by no means certain that each citizen has not the right to ask every other any question he may see fit, in reference to public matters, without being liable to the charge of inquisition or impertinence; and though the person asked may have the choice of silence or speech, he is under the common obligation that rests on all men, *if he answers at all, to tell the truth. No oaths sworn, however solemnly, nor with the direst penalties that a secret midnight association ever devised, can discharge a citizen from the eternal duty of veracity.* The difficulties in respect to truthfulness, in which a member is involved, arise from his oath to conceal the existence of the order, and his own connection with it. If he were allowed to confess that there is such an order, and that he belongs to it, he then might frankly and consistently refuse to tell anything further. But the object seems to be to protect the members from the odium with which secret political associations have been viewed in this country, and to secure the benefits of such an organization, while they escape the responsibility of a connection with it. There is more of wily cunning, than of republican frankness and manhood, in such a course.

But this secrecy necessarily destroys all confidence between men. Till this new order sprung into existence, with its frightful demands upon the conscience of its members, there existed among the citizens of our country such mutual trustfulness that the statements of men of good character were received without distrust upon all subjects; but since it has come to be admitted that some men, of hitherto unquestioned veracity, have falsely denied their connection with the order of the Know-Nothings, and it has even been more than suspected that some of those from whom we have a right to expect an especial purity of life, and by whom we have been accustomed to be taught that it is better to die than to stain our lips with untruth, have taken the oath before quoted, and which requires of them conduct so much at variance with their teaching, it is not to be wondered at that some have become skeptical of the *existence of human veracity.* The whole social fabric rests upon the belief of truth among men; and the strongest bond of faith in an individual's truthfulness, is the well-founded opinion that he has never once voluntarily defiled his soul with falsehood. To conceal effectually their connection with the order, the members may be, and some possibly have been, driven to a line of conduct, in my opinion, more reprehensible than a direct

denial of the truth—the acting of a protracted and systematic falsehood. Having formerly belonged to the old Whig and Democratic parties, and not daring to excite suspicions, or to confirm those already entertained, of their belonging to the Know-Nothings, by separating themselves openly from their old friends, they still affect to retain their interest in party action and party success, allow themselves to be treated as members of their old parties, become possessed of information, which is given to them, as they well know, on the belief of their being still faithful to their former friends, and yet, while acting thus, they are under oaths which bind them to different parties, different principles, and different candidates.

That this is no idle supposition of my own, as some credulous persons, who think that such things cannot be in a free and manly country like our own, may be tempted to exclaim, I will quote from the resolves of a Know-Nothing Council in Brooklyn, New York. The preamble to those resolves declares that, “GOOD MEN and TRUE had already been nominated by the great political parties of the State, THE NOMINATION OF SOME OF WHOM WAS EFFECTED BY THE DIRECT ACTION OF THIS ORDER.” If any man, Whig or Democrat, had smuggled himself into a meeting of the other party, by pretending to belong to it, the judgment of all men would reprobate the act as perfidious and disgraceful. The contempt of all honorable men would follow him like a curse. What rule of morals can tolerate in members of this order, that which is condemned in all other parties? Their first departure from sound principles in joining the order, involves subsequent delinquencies to conceal it, and make it effectual. If trade and commerce require good faith and sincerity in those who follow those callings, how much more are they indispensable among those who are acting for the public, and whose conduct may influence for years their country’s welfare.

It is to be expected, with absolute certainty, that an institution thus organized, and pursuing such purposes, will be despotic, will trample all those sacred rights, which the contrivers of the order, and those who profit by the delusion, pretend it was established to secure. This is one of the wicked consequences which the most untutored sagacity could not fail to predict. But all that could be anticipated is more than realized by the declarations of the Brooklyn council, which I find in the New York Herald, a paper friendly to the order, and which treats the whole proceeding as authentic.

“Whereas the action of the Grand Council of the State of New York, at their late session in October last, in making an independent nomination for State officers without instructions to that effect from the subordinate councils of the State, and without giving them an opportunity to participate in the selection of such candidates, and when no necessity existed for such a course, inasmuch as GOOD MEN and TRUE had already been nominated by the great political parties of the State, the nomination of some of whom was effected by the direct action of this order, was a departure from the true interests and objects of this order, an unwarrantable assumption of power, and in direct violation of resolutions adopted by the same Grand Council in June last;

“And whereas the said Grand Council adopted resolutions presented by Chauncey Shaffer, putting an unwarrantable and *ex post facto* construction upon the obligations of the members of this order, thereby endeavoring to coerce and compel them, by THREATS and PENALTIES, to vote for the candidates so nominated by said Grand Council, in direct violation of the Constitution and laws of the Land,

and subversive of the genius and spirit of our republican institutions;

“And whereas the said Grand Council, at their recent session, adopted a resolution originally suggested by H. A. T. Granbury, requiring the members of this order, under certain pains and penalties, to CONFESS, under oath, how they voted at the recent election, in palpable violation of the rights and privileges secured to, and so highly prized by, every true American: Therefore,

“Resolved, That we repudiate and condemn the aforementioned action of the Grand Council as ANTI-AMERICAN, ANTI-REPUBLICAN, and the most UNWARRANTABLE, ABOMINABLE, and DANGEROUS ASSUMPTION OF DESPOTIC POWER ever attempted in this Republic; in its CONFESSORIAL, PENANCE, and threats of EXCOMMUNICATION, only equaled by the holy INQUISITION OF SPAIN, and only worthy of imitation by the GRAND COUNCIL OF CARDINALS at ROME.

“Resolved, That any American, assenting or yielding obedience to such degrading and inquisitorial requisitions, inherits not the spirit of his revolutionary sires, and is unworthy the name of a son of ’76, and descends to the level of an ignorant Papist.

“Resolved, That we recommend our brethren to pause and calmly reflect before they aid in centralizing so dangerous a power in the hands of a body who, however pure they may now be, may, at some future time, be composed of unprincipled men who, regardless of the public interests, will wield it for their own personal aggrandizement.

“C. J. SHEPARD, President.

“W. C. HEATON, Secretary.”

Thus, the council, not satisfied with the oath that required each member to vote for the nominee of the order, attempts to impose a new one, to discover whether the first was violated, with the penalty of disgraceful expulsion to each member who confesses that he voted any other than the regular ticket. Mark in what language the Brooklyn council describes the iniquitous interference with the rights of suffrage. See how it quotes the precedents of Roman Papish oppression to stigmatize their own brethren, united with themselves in a crusade against the freedom of suffrage, the freedom of conscience, and the equality of the citizens. If you, sir, or I, had used such terms, it might be said that we were denouncing what we did not understand, but coming from those who know the purposes and the system of the order, and who have smarted under the rod of its intolerance, who have tasted the first fruits of this graft of their own culture, it may be received as true.

It has been claimed, in support of the order, that both of the old parties are corrupt, and that it was necessary to form a new party, of purer principles and better material. An architect who should pronounce both of two buildings which he had examined, unsound and unsafe, in structure and detail, would hardly be thought reliable if he should attempt to construct another edifice of the brick and stone which he had just condemned as useless and unworthy. Yet this order assumes to form, out of the corrupt members of the old parties, a society of immaculate patriots. A few of the old partisans get together and rate themselves above reproach, and then adopt such other citizens, members of the old corrupt parties, as are willing to unite in asserting the knavery of all other men, and their own purity. This Pharisaical assumption of superiority is worthy of all rebuke and contempt. When I weigh the characters, when I ponder upon the course of those understood to be of this new faith, I confess I find little to mortify my self-esteem or extort my admiration. I find them to be but as other men, having like infirmities as ourselves, neither purer nor wiser, nor more patriotic, than their fellow-citizens. I discover in them quite as much lust of place and

self, quite as much resignation in allowing the weight of office to be thrust upon themselves, and to the full as much of partisan and uncharitable feeling as others who affect a less degree of exemption from the ordinary frailties of their race. Those of this order supposed to be in this House, I must say, in all courtesy, I cannot rank one whit above the average of their fellow members, in the qualities of citizens or legislators. Self-canonized saints, and self-elected patriots, are of questionable stuff. There is a spontaneous distrust of the assumption that arrogates to itself a Benjamin's portion of the common stock of human virtue and excellence; and the claim of imposters is usually extensive in proportion as it is groundless.

In a free Government, I hold, sir, that there is no right in a portion of the people, whether a minority or a majority, to adopt a secret political policy, or pursue it by secret means. The Commonwealth is the joint product of the thoughts and wills of the people who compose it. They have risked their mutual interests in a common venture. Counsel and service are due from each to all. Whatever pertains to the common benefit is the proper subject of mutual deliberation. The thoughts and reflection of each are proper tribute to the common fund of knowledge; and when contributed and weighed, the deliberate judgment of the society becomes the rule of action to the members, both as to what purposes of common good they shall pursue, and how they shall accomplish it. I, as a member of society, may justly expect its protection in every right which the laws or the Constitution give me—protection not only against foreign invasion, but also against domestic violence; against the man who assaults my person, or wrests my property from me; but not a whit less against those who, by means of secret cabals, midnight assemblages, unnatural oaths, and malicious combinations, would peril, impair, or destroy any one of my civil or political rights. Society can only protect me, can only protect itself against the effects of these secret political associations, by extirpating them. They are the fruits and the offspring of revolution; they are the storm-birds that portend the tempest, and make it horrible; but putrid bodies which the thunder of anarchy lifts from the deep in which they slumbered.

All citizens, I think, sir, are under obligations of candor and sincerity towards each other in matters political. I think the very nature of a free Government requires it of them. The ballot of each voter is intended to be secret only so far as to protect him against violence, or any undue influence in preparing and casting it. This right to absolute freedom in performing this high civil act, is not clearer than the corresponding obligation of every other man to refrain from all attempts to disturb, oppress, or intimidate him in the exercise of it. But when the ballot is put into the box, it ceases to be a mere private act, and becomes a part of the public history. An attempt at concealment provokes inquiry, and justifies it. There can be but two reasons for keeping a vote secret—timidity, if we think ourselves right, or shame and conscious guilt, if we believe ourselves wrong. And a man must be deficient in some of the better qualities of citizenship, who is willing to assign either of them as an excuse for a secret vote. And the motives that prompt the vote, since he has no right to be

influenced by any but those of the public good, are also proper subjects of inquiry, and *if the voter be a man, of free and truthful answer.* No man ever cast a secret vote, even if his purpose were as kindly a one as to avoid making a preference between rival friends, but felt his self-respect lowered, and that he had not acted up to the full dignity of citizenship. There is, and there should be, no penalty attached to the exercise of the right of voting, but the estimate which the public may attach to a man's character, according as he is thought to have used his privilege well or ill. It is simply an item going to make up the aggregate of character. Nor should there be laws compelling him to declare how he voted; in free countries, the great mass of men being independent, in fact, as well as name, will spurn concealment in the matter; and I do not know, in all history, of more than one inquisitorial attempt, by an *ex post facto* law, to compel the citizen to declare for whom he had voted; and this attempt, so tyrannical, was made, not by foreigners, who, ignorant of the genius of republicanism, might, unconsciously, have violated its principles; nor by the old parties of the country who, immersed in senility and corruption, might be indifferent to the forms of liberty, but by the conclave of patriots who assembled in New-York as a Know Nothing Council, representatives of those who are to regenerate America; who, mourning the decay of public spirit, and the corruption of national virtue, have, by *self election, and the imposition of their own hands*, set themselves apart for the work of reformation. I have said, and I repeat it, that I think there is the strongest obligation among *freemen* to be open and candid in all political matters. Among slaves, or those who approach the servile condition, even though they have the forms of freedom, secrecy is to be expected. But its use is an unwholesome regimen for the growth and nurture of the manly virtues. I am sure, sir, you would hardly be willing to continue a private partnership—and society has often, and not inaptly, in many important respects, been likened to one—in which you knew a portion of the partners had formed a secret league, in reference to partnership business, confirmed by oaths, guarded by mysterious ciphers, grips of the hand, passwords, signs of recognition, and all the machinery of secrecy by which the men of disorder have, from time immemorial, guarded their schemes against the peace and the welfare of society; I am sure you would be justified in the suspicion that your rights were very insecure, and in taking prompt steps for their preservation. And yet we, sir, the people of a free country, are told that there is a political association in our midst, secret as the grave, except when accident has betrayed it, and as inexorable in the proscription of all not connected with it. If your rights are safe from it to-day, will they be so to-morrow; or from some secret association to be formed next week? If the right to create such is recognized now, how can it be denied in future, when other isms will be seeking the aid of secrecy to accomplish their schemes, or wreak their revenge? Free Governments are controlled greatly by precedents and general rules, and if, for a temporary purpose, or a scanty good, you abandon wholesome principles, you have broken down the most effectual barriers against despotism.

Public opinion is one of the most efficient restraints on human action. The punishments of this world seem, with but too many, more terrible than the retribution of that which is to come. The criticism, the censure of men often restrain evil-disposed persons, and an enlightened public opinion guides and sustains the virtue of individuals. We find the action of political parties is purest when it is most under the public eye; and as the veil of secrecy is thrown about it, there is a culpable laxity of conduct. A private caucus, though there is no obligation of secrecy, is thought less free from corruption than a public convention. Meetings, of which there is no record but the unsafe memory of those present, are likely to be less judicious than those in which every thing is recorded and published. A railroad, or other corporation directory, which gives its proceedings no publicity in a twelvemonth, is the subject of distrust, and too often falls into downright knavery. These things we all see and know; and yet it is maintained that it is possible for an association, secret, irresponsible, its members unknown, and denying their connection with it, to select its candidates and elect them, and to control the Government of a great country without danger to the rights of the people, or of corruption among the members. Where this secrecy begins, freedom ends. When the streets of Paris streamed with blood; when the guillotine was the only engine whose activity was not palsied by the general terror that pervaded the land, the orders that plunged France into such frightful calamities issued from the midnight, secret, irresponsible association of the Jacobins. A career that begins in religious and political proscription may well end, like theirs, with the lamp-post and the guillotine.

These new political doctors object to the secrecy which prevails in an ordinary convention, yet secrecy is not the rule, but the exception, in such assemblies. They know that the corruption which attends them is proportioned to the privacy with which they are conducted; that men commit acts in the safety of midnight caucuses, which they would not dare in the light of day, and the remedy they offer is an association in which all is caucus, all secrecy, all irresponsibility. The evil *exception* which they denounce in others, they adopt as the *rule* of their own conduct. If a little secrecy works such harm in ordinary politics, what must the whole machinery of oaths, and grips, and pass words, do for this new association. I believe it will work everywhere, as it has wrought in the instance of the New York Council already quoted, its abundant harvest of tyranny, deceit, and perjury. The order employs more secrecy in a single night than is used in preparing and conducting both the national conventions of the Whigs and Democrats. How, then, can this terrible poison fail to work its natural effect of corruption on them. Perhaps, on the principle that one poison sometimes neutralizes another, the proscription and intolerance which they swear to practice are an antidote to the secrecy which is found necessary in accomplishing their purposes.

The first avowed purpose of the order which I shall discuss is the exclusion of foreigners from office. The pledge of the member on entering the order is, that "he will not vote, or give his influence, for any man for any office in the gift of the people, unless he be an American-born citizen."

A judicious man, it seems to me, will hardly deny that it is equally criminal to do, by indirection, as to do openly, that which we are forbidden under the Constitution. That instrument provides that no man shall be a Senator in Congress who "shall not have attained to the age of thirty years, and been nine years a citizen of the United States," &c.; that no man shall be a Representative "who shall not have attained to the age of twenty-five years, and been seven years a citizen of the United States," &c., (art. 1, sec. 2 and 3.) These clauses of the Constitution confer on alien-born citizens a complete eligibility to seats in the House of Representatives and Senate, when the respective periods of age and citizenship have been completed, as upon native-born citizens. No man will deny that Congress possesses no power to add, by law, to the age or period of citizenship fixed by the Constitution, and that such a law would be unconstitutional and void. Any attempt to do so would be an assault upon a right which the framers of the Constitution thought of sufficient importance to guard by a special provision, and I can see no distinction in justice between attempting to rob them of the rights by a law and by a secret association. The first is the bolder and manlier way of assault. The men who do the injury in that case are known and responsible; they hold themselves amenable to criticism, to discussion, and to the public judgment. They plant themselves upon the merit of their action, and not upon the force of numbers and the chances of escape from detection. All men admire candor and sincerity in political as well as other conduct. Until now all Americans despised secret political associations, midnight juggling, and the hatred that would strike, and yet fear to avow the blow.

There is no obligation, in my judgment, to vote for a foreigner to any office more than for any other citizen; but there is an obligation not to form a combination against him by which he is to be disfranchised, or stinted in the enjoyment of any constitutional right.

If it be true that foreigners are less fit for office than native citizens, it is a gross distrust of the national common sense to suppose the people will not act upon it, and a poor commentary upon public spirit, that special oaths, and the terrors of a secret inquisition are needed to urge them up to the discharge of an obvious duty. I cannot but believe that true policy and justice are, in this case, harmonious. These foreigners are in our midst; they have come under our invitation, and have trusted to the liberal spirit of the age, and the generous provisions of our laws and Constitution, and our purpose should be, by acting up to the full measure of good faith, to encourage them to the highest standard of republican citizenship. They are citizens, with the right to vote, and policy dictates that they should be so treated as soonest to nationalize them, that the peculiarities of their birth, education, language, and ideas may be lost in the character of our own people. There is no safety in a course that excludes them from any right which is theirs by the Constitution and laws, and which induces them, from wounded pride, to perpetuate the distinctions which separate them from the native-born citizens.

To a foreigner of just self-respect, the equality implied in voting, and the right to be elected to every office, even though he may never desire any,

is one of the strongest ties that can bind him in love and interest to the fortunes of the Republic. And if, at any time, it becomes necessary to disfranchise him of either, in the name of manhood, and justice, and republicanism, let it be done in the open light of Heaven, let it be done with the forms, the sanction, and the solemnity of a national act, and let him not feel himself the victim of a nameless persecution, tried, condemned, and punished, unheard, in the hateful manner of the inquisition, by those who blush to avow their connection with the deed. Justice would teach us that foreigners should receive a share of offices proportioned to their number, if the subject becomes a matter of mathematical division; but it would be more fortunate for the peace of the country if the question of nativity and religion were never raised, and if selections to office were made according as Mr. Jefferson's strong questions are answered, "Is he honest? Is he competent? Is he faithful to the Constitution?"

Second. The extension of the term of naturalization to twenty-one years, or some other period longer than five years.

When our country was weak, and there was apprehension that we might be attacked by foreign Powers, anxiety was felt to secure an influx of immigration. The time for that apprehension is past. I, sir, as an individual, have never cherished or expressed the anxiety which I have witnessed in others, to see our country goaded into premature growth and population; though I have rejoiced to see those who came here, either from choice or to escape oppression, sitting, in due time, at the national board, and sharing equally the abundance of our unstinted hospitality. The vision of a splendid Government, which has such fascination for many, to me is without a charm. I know that its magnificence, the pomp of its officials, the number and equipment of its fleets and armies, are but so much wrung from the scanty subsistence of labor. Wherever I witness the reckless pageantry of wealth, I know that the gaunt shadow of poverty is near by. I doubt if our rapid increase in numbers, in wealth, and power, however gratifying to our pride, have been attended with a proportionate increase of those robust and homely virtues, on which alone permanent national greatness is founded. It is the effect of great and sudden prosperity to disturb the ordinary action of the public mind, and to introduce false and deceptive standards of conduct. The whole nature of man runs wild, in a variety of excesses, and this inundation of prosperity sweeps away many of the established and respected landmarks. Seasons, such as these, try the national character more than whole years of calamity. This has produced that exuberance of intellectual movement, that redundancy of activity, that Egyptian fecundity of isms, which distinguish our country to-day. At such times, a recurrence to honored and established principles is the most wholesome regimen for the public mind.

I believe, sir, it had been better for us if we had never received, since our independence, more foreigners than could be readily assimilated to the general condition and character of our native-born population. I do not question that the intermingling of races here is one potent element of our growth and success. Those nations have been foremost in the world's history whose char-

acters have been the amalgam of the greatest variety of the best races of the earth. A constant immigration of enough to produce variety, but not to perpetuate diversity, would, I believe, contribute to preserve and increase our vigor. But I wish to see no foreign settlements in our country; no papers, schools, and school-books in a foreign tongue; no regions of country in which a traveler might fancy himself on the banks of the Rhine, or the green sward of Ireland. I desire our people to be homogenous in language and institutions; I would have the first generation of foreigners to be the last, their children I would have American in tongue, in education, in principle, and in law.

It is said that this extension is rendered necessary by the abuses of the present system.

These abuses are chiefly through false naturalization papers, and false swearing. They exist, I am inclined to think, less through any defect in the present laws than through the defect in their enforcement.* The use of false naturalization papers, illegal voting, and the perjury attendant upon both, are offenses against the laws of the State where they are committed; and it is to the State tribunals that the citizens must look for redress, and the vindication of their rights. There is no ground, none whatever, to believe that grand juries would be more active to find indictments under a new law than under the old one, nor that petit juries would be more prompt to convict.

It is useless to cumber the statute-book with laws which there is not the public virtue to enforce. No law can execute itself; it must have the agency of man to administer it, and it is useless to attempt to make the barbarous severity of the statute atone for the apathy of the people. If it could be shown that the present law had been faithfully tried, and found inefficient, there would be ample reason to ask the enactment of new laws. But there is no such proof. On the contrary, it is known that if offenses are frequent, as is charged, indictments are few, and convictions still more unfrequent. If the evil exists in the magnitude described, if offenses are so many and punishments so rare, the root of the evil would seem to lie deeper than an imperfect statute. It cannot lie in the law merely, for that would be pointed out and remedied; nor in the officers of the law, the juries, the attorneys, and the judges, for a wholesome public opinion would impel them to the discharge of their duty; but it lies deeper; I fear it lies in a corrupted public sentiment. Individuals dislike the labor and inconvenience with which a prosecution is attended, and after an ebullition of temper, and a few newspaper paragraphs upon

* Since the above was spoken I have seen a recent decision of Judge Dean, of the supreme court of New York, on the administration of the naturalization laws. He remarks: "Those courts, instead of administering this law, (of naturalization,) have, by their negligence and inattention, practically repealed it, admitting thousands to the rights of citizenship, who want all the requisites to entitle them to such admission; have been guilty of a gross violation of duty, and have made the law itself odious in public estimation."

"The man who would collect and embody in a single act, the operative portions of the various statutes on this subject, with such amendments as experience has shown are necessary to their due and faithful execution, would be a public benefactor."

"When that is done, and the laws are administered in their purity, it will be apparent that the faults have been far more in the administration than in the laws themselves."

election frauds, the matter is allowed to drop. Another reason, perhaps, quite as effectual, is that both parties in the cities have been engaged in the disreputable work of procuring fraudulent votes, and each fears to provoke inquiry into its own conduct, by attempting to expose the crimes of the other. But even if all the illegal voting complained of were confined to foreigners, by whom is the temptation to commit the offense offered? Certainly by our own native citizens; and it seems strange that the whole indignation is visited upon the foreigner, who is denounced as "ignorant and corrupt," and scarcely a censure is bestowed upon the native who debauched him, and who, I suppose, by contrast, is to be regarded as "intelligent and virtuous."

But, Mr. Chairman, it seems to me that the cause of the evil, which is ascribed to the immigration of foreigners, may be justly sought for even further back than the condition of public sentiment where it exists. As a State becomes more refined and populous, the disparity in the condition of the people becomes greater. The inequalities of wealth and social advantages are more obvious; the rich become richer, and the poor poorer. If there be any method of preventing this result, political philosophy has not yet announced it; and the evil has begun to be felt in this country in our large cities. There is, in all of them, a portion of the community, happily for us yet small, who are sunk in vice and ignorance. As the population becomes denser, there will be accessions constantly to the number, and in due time there will exist a class in this country, as in the Old World, in which vice, and crime, and destitution will be the hereditary condition. It is from this class, and those who approach its condition, that the material for fraudulent voting is drawn. In agricultural regions, where the means of living are cheap and abundant, it is almost unknown; but, as a rule, I believe the evil will be found to increase in exact proportion with the density of the population. So far as this class exists in our midst, a large share of it, I believe, will be found among the foreign population; because they congregate about the cities, where the vice of proletarianism mainly flourishes, and because the native population, from its superior intelligence and familiarity with the mode of life here, has retained the more lucrative occupations, leaving to the foreigner the humbler and cheaper ones, and those which are first to suffer from revulsions in trade and commerce. Population and production march on closely together; there will not, for any great length of time, be a wide disparity between the supply of food and the number of people to consume it. And when the amount produced and that requisite for consumption are about equal, a slight decrease of the former, or of the supply of labor by which it is to be produced, results in poverty and starvation. Such is the state of things in the greater part of Europe. Such, in a mitigated form, is getting to be the condition of our larger cities. The accounts of the destitution now prevailing in some of them, among the honest and industrious, and the gloomy anticipations of the coming winter, are heart-rending. Yet Government has not caused it; the tariff has not caused it; foreigners have not caused it; nor even the present war, though that event may have precipitated it. It is the effect of those mutations which are the

inevitable condition of existence, and which are brought about by the whole variety of those perplexed causes which have produced that result which we call the "present state of things." Our very prosperity has been as effective in bringing it about, as any other cause. High excitements in the commercial world are always followed by periods of languor and depression, and the suggestions of quacks, and their still more dangerous remedies, are alike to be discarded. Republican institutions can protect us against unjust legislation, oppressive taxes, and guilty wars, but they cannot secure us against the inexorable laws of trade, commerce, and manufactures. It is, then, unjust to ascribe to transient causes evils which appear inseparable from the structure of civilized society.

But, sir, if all these evils were the result of fraudulent voting, how would the mischief be remedied by extending the period of probation from five to twenty-one years? If five years' delay is so irksome that the foreigner will risk the penalties of fraudulent voting and perjury to escape it, it seems to me the temptation would be multiplied fourfold by increasing the delay to twenty-one years.

So far as the extension of the period to twenty-one years is a sentiment, a mere gratification of a feeling, or a prejudice, it is either above or beneath reason, but as a statesman's remedy for an existing abuse, it seems entirely incompetent and unsatisfactory.

The laws of naturalization I regard as I do any other laws—justly open to revision and amendment. If defects of any importance exist, they ought to be remedied promptly; and I am ready to vote for all such changes as may be found expedient. I am satisfied, after listening to all that I can hear upon the subject, to let the period of five years remain in the statute; yet, I am not so wedded to that time that I would consider any change of it by Congress an outrage upon the rights of foreigners, or upon the Constitution. I am very ready to hear all argument upon the subject; but, so far as I have comprehended the evils under which we are said to labor, I find no adaptation in the remedy to the disease. The great evil of a foreign population is hardly noticed in the discussion, and the changes of the law proposed, and the persecuting creed of the Know-Nothings, are alike trivial when compared with it. The magnitude of the evil these midnight reformers see, perhaps, but fear to grapple with. The discussion of it is too portentous, too pregnant with the high philosophy of races, population, and government, to be handled by those whose whole political pharmacy is persecution, whose highest ambition the ejection of an Irish tide-waiter from his office, and the summit of their statesmanship to combine the "isms" that are *out* against the Democrats who are *in*. The real danger is, that foreigners will congregate in some States of the Union in such numbers, preserving the language, manners, and traditions of the Old World, as to root out the native population speaking the English tongue, and that we may come to be a Confederacy of States as foreign in origin, in language, customs, institutions, and religion, as are the several nations combined by force under the sway of the Emperor of Austria, or the Czar of Russia. Nothing can tend to accomplish this more speedily than proscription. If the foreigner finds himself

one of a degraded caste while living among the native population, he will naturally seek those regions in which his own countrymen are numerous, and a little more concentration of the foreign population in some of the northwestern States will give them an absolute numerical majority, and insure the control there. In such an event, they would, of course, retaliate the proscription under which they had suffered; they would, perhaps, become even as intolerant as the Know-Nothings, and permit no native-born citizen, nor the son of a native, to vote or hold office; they would send naturalized foreigners to represent them here in both Houses, as they would have the constitutional right to do; they would have their relative weight in presidential elections, and the "foreign vote" would then be something distinct and palpable for politicians to intrigue after. No state of things could be more deplorable than the war of races, of which this order is the beginning, and if it be not crushed at once by the honesty and common sense of the people, it may give to our history a chapter as dark and bloody as that of the English revolutions, or of the religious wars of the Huguenots and Catholics in France. You know, sir, that this is the evil to be dreaded in the future, compared to which all German anti-Sabbath societies, Irish riots, illegal voting, and foreign military companies sink into utter insignificance, and before which, as remedies, the extension of the term of naturalization to twenty-one years, and the Know-Nothing remedy of exclusion from office, are but as bands of tow to devouring flames. Neither of these would diminish perceptibly the number of immigrants; and, while the annual supply continues, or increases, any law which tends to perpetuate the distinction of races will only make the ultimate danger more formidable.

The duty of excluding paupers, vagrants, convicts, and felons, is imperative; and if the evil be as great as is charged, the only surprise is, that we have allowed a public mischief of such gravity to exist so long. Laws, rigorous and effective, should be enacted, if such are not now on the statute-book; and every citizen who regards the public weal, should unite, heartily, in their enforcement.

The third remedy proposed is the repeal of the naturalization laws. Before the adoption of the Constitution, each State passed its own laws upon this subject, and, of course, there was great diversity. To obviate this, the power was given the Federal Government "to pass uniform naturalization laws." As the States were exercising the power to naturalize foreigners when they gave it up, that the law might be made "uniform," a failure to employ it by Congress would induce them to exercise all the rights they yet have, and which are very considerable, on that subject.

Under the Constitution, the foreign inhabitants, whether naturalized or not, are enumerated as a part of the basis of representation, and give additional power to the States where they reside.

The effect of naturalization is, to give all the rights of citizenship at once, with the three exceptions enumerated in the Constitution, and which I have already quoted.

Though the rights conferred are thus ample, it is competent for the States to bestow nearly all of them upon the unnaturalized foreigner, by virtue

of their State sovereignty. He may be allowed to vote in State and Federal elections, may be allowed to hold and to transmit real estate, and may be made eligible to any State office. But these rights would not be recognized in other States except by special action. In every State where similar laws had not been enacted, he would be in the position of an alien. A law of Congress is required to entitle him to the benefit of that provision of the Constitution contained in the first paragraph of article fourth, section second:

"The citizens of each State shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States."

Such a man would not be "a citizen" of the United States, though he might be enjoying nearly all the rights of citizenship in a particular State. The right to vote, which appears to be considered one of the privileges bestowed by naturalization, is derived from another source. Each State can fix the qualification of its own voters, can enlarge or contract that franchise at its pleasure; and if a State should deny the electoral franchise to all persons not natives of it, the right to do so, I presume, would be unquestioned.

Thus we discover that even the repeal of the naturalization laws would not protect us from the influx of foreigners, nor from the ill effects of their voting, in case any of the States see fit to bestow that right upon them; and if the naturalization laws should be repealed, or the term extended to twenty-one years, under the influence of a temporary excitement, the natural reaction of popular feeling would demand a restoration of the old law; or the right of voting, and other privileges of citizenship, would be conferred by the States upon their alien inhabitants. The power of each State, then, is ample over its own ballot-box, and it can be approached only by those on whom she confers the right. There is not a voter of the Union who derives his power from the Federal Government; he may be naturalized under a law of Congress, and possess all that such laws can bestow, yet never be permitted to cast a vote or hold a State office in the Union. This is fortunate, as the necessities of States are different. In some, the foreign population is so numerous as to require, perhaps, some State legislation; in others, there is so little that it is merged in the mass of the native-born people. The proportion of natives to foreigners in some States, is as one to eight or ten; in others—Mississippi for instance—as one to sixty of the native white population. It seems natural that States of such dissimilar conditions should have laws adapted to their peculiar necessities, and if abuses have arisen where the foreign population is dense, which require laws for their eradication, it is useless, not to say foolish, for States, where those abuses are unknown, to enact laws for their suppression.

The foreign population of Mississippi is reported in the census at five thousand; the entire white population three hundred thousand. These foreigners, for the most part, are peaceable, industrious, useful citizens. They keep up no separate schools, publish no papers in their native tongue, affect no interests distinct from those of the rest of the community, and are steadily being absorbed into the mass of the people. Nor have they, sir, done that which seems the unpardonable offense—obtained more than a share of public office.

Why, then, does Mississippi need to join in any persecution, open or covert, of her foreign population? Why should Congress enact any general law applicable to her, which she does not need, for the convenience of those States whose situation may, indeed, require it, but who have full power, in their State rights, to enact any law their exigencies demand? Our foreign population does us no injury which the laws of Congress can redress. The evil is local, so should the remedy be.

I am influenced by considerations of this kind, when I say that I am not fired with the prospect of a splendid Government, nor anxious to see our population swelled with a mighty influx of foreigners. In due season the time will arrive when the natural increase of our native people will spread over our territory, and at a more distant period the condition of a crowded and redundant population will be reached. As this condition is approached, there is less of happiness proportionably; at least there is a far more visible crying misery. The fortunate classes may enjoy more, but the poorer classes suffer more. Any course of action giving an artificial stimulus to the causes which will bring this state of things, is to be shunned. There are no new worlds on which the excess of population here can be poured. Europe and Asia will alike present barriers in their own crowded nations to any addition from these shores. The evil, when it comes to exist here, must find its solution at home. Highly colored pictures are often shown us of the myriad population that is to be poured upon us, and the measures I have been discussing are pointed to as remedies for that state of things. These I esteem utterly worthless for the purpose.

I do not deny, on the contrary I affirm, the right of a nation to impose such terms on the influx of foreigners as a due regard to her own interest and safety require. She is the sole judge of the evil and the remedy. If there were just reason to apprehend such an immigration from Europe or Asia, as would unduly crowd our people, impoverish our labor, or exhaust our soil, I should advocate a policy more prompt, and adapted to the emergency, than the ritual of the Know-Nothings, or their clumsy imitation of the secrecy and persecution of the Jesuits. We have the right, and I should favor its exercise in that extremity, to deny all foreigners admission, and I would, in that case, have our coast present an iron front to the tide of immigration as it does to the waves of the ocean, so long as the danger existed. But I would appeal to the manly, common sense of the people, and have our action, if any were taken, wear all the dignity of national justice and self-defence, and not the sinister aspect of a revengeful intrigue and midnight cabal. I do not believe the time for such action has come; and if it were now thick upon us, the remedies of Know-Nothingism are poor, flimsy—wholly inadequate.

It cannot be denied that the policy of our Government has been to encourage immigration. The vast amount of fertile unoccupied territory, the number of canals to be dug, of railroads to be built, and all the variety of labor required in a new country, induced our ancestors to solicit foreign aid. The surplus labor and capital of Europe found employment here. Most of the immigrants

settled in the northern and northwestern States, and it is owing to this addition to their native population that their numbers have increased faster than the southern States. The natural growth of population at the South, is as rapid as in any part of the world. These foreigners not only brought their strength to increase our productive industry, but the aggregate of money they have introduced into the country, has been very large; many of them being inferior in education and social advantages to our native population, turned to those occupations which are almost solely physical, requiring vigor of muscle, and strength of constitution, leaving to the native population almost a monopoly of the more scientific and remunerative branches of industry. This population has furnished to the North a large increase of capital. It has supplied capital with a cheaper labor, by increasing the amount of it. It has given greater activity to manufacturers, by adding several millions to the number of consumers. It has strengthened the shipping interest, by an amount of passage money equal, it is said, to the whole export freights of the country. The North could not have completed one tenth of her improvements, and kept up her other interests to their present extent, without this foreign labor. Most of these improvements at the South have been made by the native labor, and without materially diminishing the annual supply of the staple productions of the country. As a section, the North has reaped the benefits of this immigration, and it will have to meet the consequences which flow from it. The question of the organization of labor, its rights and duties, is perhaps the most vexed one of all that disturb the body politic. By immigration we are perhaps fifty years in advance of what we should have been, had increase in numbers been natural only. The difficulties that attend our condition are not mainly attributable to the *foreign origin* of a part of the population, but to the number of the population. If every foreigner were this day removed from the country, and natives in equal numbers substituted, the difficulties which exist now would be as great then, and substantially the same. It matters not where the population is born, if there is not work for them to do, and they have no accumulations in store, there will be want, misery, and destitution. It results from the density of population, and not from its nativity. If the population of New York city were to-day wholly native, would the cessation of business, the partial suspension of manufactures, trade, and commerce, afflict them less sorely than it does the present mixed population? But yesterday, and there was labor for all, and, with labor, food and contentment; to-day there is a deficient supply, and at the same time a greater scarcity and dearth of the necessities of life. If there be any way to prevent these fluctuations in business, and the suffering consequent upon them, it has never yet been made known.

I have alluded to these things, sir, not in the spirit of crimination—God forbid, sir—for the whole country lies too near my heart for me to feel anything but the warmest sympathy for any section whose happiness is impaired, but for the purpose of pointing out what seems to me the very root of the disorder complained of. And, I think, both of the great sections of the Union

might find a practical argument for mutual charity in the fact, that the social condition of each has in it the germs of consequence which will give home occupation to their wisdom and philanthropy without either intermeddling in the affairs of the other. As soon as the population of the South becomes so dense that labor is not remunerated, and there are no new regions for it to occupy, its period of trouble will have arrived; and the same is true, equally true, of the North. So far as immigration may help to bring this state of things prematurely, so far the troubles consequent upon it are attributable to foreign population; but I repeat that it is a *question of numbers, not of race or nativity*.

The last purpose to be achieved by the Know-Nothings, is the exclusion of all Catholics from office. That this is one object to be accomplished by the order, is evident from the oath taken by the members upon admission, and which I have already quoted. It is not to be denied that there is diversity of opinion among the brethren of different sections. The order seems already to have fallen into the most corrupt practice attributed to the old parties, and to the most corrupt class of the old politicians, that of varying its creed with every change of latitude. In the infancy of its existence, it is already mature in its vices, and with a most surprising harmony between the end and the means, it aims at political and religious intolerance by seizing on every prejudice and adopting every creed. The foreign Protestant is told that the order strikes only at Catholicism, and the native Catholic is assured that it interferes with no man's religion, but attempts to limit the influence of foreigners.

In Louisiana, Catholics are allowed to join the order, we are told—and why? because that denomination is too numerous there to be assailed openly. If the order throughout the Union is sincere in its hostility to Catholicism, then the Catholics of Louisiana and elsewhere, who are persuaded that their faith is not to be harmed, are deceived and betrayed; but if they are not thus deceived, all others who have joined with the hope of crushing the influence of that church, are imposed upon, and have sworn their oaths in vain. In either event there is deception, which compels us to distrust, and should teach us to shun, the order of the Know-Nothings.

It is something that will, I dare say, excite surprise through the civilized world, when it becomes known, that the people of this country, who have been first to practice, in its fullest extent, the great Christian doctrine of toleration, are engaged in discussing whether or not the Government is safe while it continues. England which, three centuries ago, disfranchised the Catholics, and has since, under the influence of our example, gradually relaxed the stringency of her laws, may well distrust her course, if our experiment demonstrates that even a Republic is endangered by religious freedom among its citizens. With what show of justice or consistency can we plead to the Catholic sovereigns of Europe for the toleration of Protestantism in their dominions, while we disfranchise our fellow-citizens of the Catholic faith. How can we ask them to go forward in relaxing the fetters of opinion, while we are going backward? How dare we talk of freedom of conscience, when more than a million of our citi-

zens are to be excluded from office for conscience sake.

Yesterday, to have argued in favor of religious toleration in this country, would have been absurd, for none could have been found to deny or question it. But to-day, there is a sect boasting that it can control the country, avowing the old papist and monarchical doctrine of political exclusion for religious opinions' sake. The arguments by which they sustain themselves, are those by which the Inquisition justified their probing the consciences, and burning the bodies of men five hundred year ago, and against which Protestantism has struggled since the days of Luther. You, sir, and I, and all of us, owe our own right to worship God according to our consciences, to that very doctrine which this new order abjures; and if the right of the Catholic is first assailed, and destroyed, you, sir, or another member who believes according to a different Protestant creed, may be excluded from this House, and from other preferment, because of your religious faith. The security of all citizens rests upon the same broad basis of universal right. Confederates who disfranchise one class of citizens soon turn upon each other; the strong argument of general right is destroyed by their united action, and the proscriptionist of yesterday is the proscribed of to-morrow. Human judgment has recognized the inexorable justice of the sentence which consigned Robespierre and his accomplices to the same guillotine to which they had condemned so many thousand better men.

No nation can content itself with a single act of persecution; either public intelligence will reject that as unworthy of itself, or public prejudice will add others to it. If the Catholic be untrustworthy as a citizen, and the public liberty is unsafe in his keeping, it is but a natural logical consequence that he shall not be permitted to disseminate a faith which is adjudged hostile to national independence; that he shall not be allowed to set the evil example of the practice of his religion before the public, that it shall not be preached from the pulpit, that it shall not be taught in the schools, and that, by all the energy of the law, it shall be utterly exterminated.

If this faith be incompatible with good citizenship, and you set about to discourage it, destroy it utterly, uproot it from the land. Petty persecution will but irritate a sect which the Know-Nothings denounce as so powerful and so dangerous. This was the course which England pursued when she entertained the same fears of the Catholics three hundred years ago, and which she has lived to see the absurdity of, and has removed almost, if not quite, every disability imposed. Perhaps, however, this new sect will not startle the public mind by proposing too much at once, and holds that it will be time enough to propose further and more minute persecution, when the national sentiment is debauched enough to entertain favorably this first great departure from the unbounded toleration of our fathers.

It is the experience of this country that persecution strengthens a new creed. The manhood of our nature, of all true, genuine men, clings more ardently to a faith which brings peril to the believer. Perhaps it is true of all times and countries. Christianity grew strongest under persecution—not merely the exclusion from office, which is the condemnation of the Know-Nothing

conventicles, but when the faggots and the stake were the portion of the true believer. With the history of Protestantism so recent, and so fresh in our minds, its birth in the very bosom of the Romish Church, where the civil and ecclesiastical power were united to discourage and destroy every species of heresy; its growth amid every form of danger, obloquy, and persecution; its triumph, by the aid of truth and reason; and remembering how every effort to destroy it only planted it deeper in the hearts of the faithful, it is natural to believe that persecution will invigorate other creeds and sects. Whoever has the courage to bear the torture for conscience, will kindle more sympathy, and attract more converts, than the most eloquent tongue. In my judgment, this attempt at proscription will do more to spread Catholicism here than all the treasures of Rome, or all the Jesuitism of the Cardinals.

Now, sir, what is this movement at the North, and who are engaged in it? It is a combination of all the "isms" of that section. Abolitionism, Free-Soilism, Whigism, Woman-Rightism, Socialism, Anti-Rentism, gathered together from a thousand fretful rills, and mingling their currents in one common channel. Abolitionism and Know-Nothingism are akin; the first is a denial of the rights of a section of the Union, and an attempt to destroy them, because, in its wisdom, it has determined that those rights have not the proper moral sanction; the other is a denial of the rights of a class of citizens, regardless of section. One is a crusade against the rights of States; the other against the rights of individuals. The one openly spurns the Constitution; the other attempts a flimsy evasion of it. This daringly attempts a breach and an assault; that more cunningly adopts and prepares a surprise. The one almost commands respect for nefarious schemes by boldness and courage; the other would bring discredit on the best of causes, by evasion, circuitry, and irresponsible assaults. In Massachusetts, when the sect made their own nominations, so far as I can learn the politics of those elected to Congress, all are ultra anti-slavery men. No man suspected of moderation was allowed to occupy a seat here. The candidate whom they elected Governor declared:

"It is not true that I am, or have ever been, in favor of the fugitive slave bill. I never voted for a man who favored it, knowing such to be his views; and I must very much change before I ever do. I never, by word, act, or vote, favored its passage, and I am an advocate of its essential modification, or, in lieu thereof, its UNCONDITIONAL REPEAL."

The following resolutions of a Know-Nothing convention, held in Norfolk, Massachusetts, show the sectionalism and intolerance of the order:

"Resolved, That in the present chaotic condition of parties in Massachusetts, the only star above the horizon is the love of human liberty and the abhorrence of slavery, and that it is the duty of anti-slavery men to rally around the Republican party as an organization which invites the united action of the people on the one transcending question of slave dominion, which now divides the Union.

"Whereas, Roman Catholicism and slavery being alike founded and supported on the basis of ignorance and tyranny; and being, therefore, natural allies in every warfare against liberty and enlightenment; therefore be it

"Resolved, That there can exist no real hostility to Roman Catholicism which does not embrace slavery, its natural coworker in opposition to freedom and republican institutions."

Those whom the order voted for, elsewhere in the North, are of the ultra stamp, almost with-

out exception. To secure the vote of the Free-Soilers and Abolitionists of both the old parties, it was indispensable to have a candidate tinged strongly with those heresies, and a flavor of Know-Nothingism was added to secure the coöperation of certain Democrats, whom unadulterated Whiggery and Abolitionism might have disgusted. It was a combination and a triumph of all that was ultra, and factious, and discontented, over all that was moderate, and judicious, and studious of the public peace.

Now that most of the elections at the North are over, a laborious attempt is made to persuade the South that the order is free of those Abolition tendencies which secured its triumph. The one great fact relied on is, that the order in New York is opposed to Seward. Let us inquire into this. There is a strife in that State between the Silver Grey or Fillmore Whigs and the Sewardites. It is, in the main, a personal strife, the rivalry of two ambitious men. Seward has taken ground against the Know-Nothings for two reasons, I suppose. He, in common with other Whigs of New York, had, in past years, committed himself upon certain questions designed to win favor with the foreign voters, and could not join in this new persecution without gross inconsistency. But, worse than that, he, in common with the Whigs of the Union, had supported General Scott, who had advocated in the canvass giving to any foreigner who served in the armies of the United States twelve months the right to vote. He had read without public dissent, as had the rest of the Whig party, General Scott's speeches on his western tour, in which there were warm eulogies of "the rich Irish brogue, with the illigant Jarmin accent," and if others are willing, in two years' time to pass from eulogists and supplants of foreigners, to abusers and persecutors, it seems that he is not. He knows that judicious men will ask: Were you sincere, two years since, when you attempted to cajole the foreign vote, or are you sincere now? If you were in earnest then, what great events have occurred to change your views so completely? If you were not in earnest then, how shall we trust you now? Efforts were made to array all the prejudice of the Catholics against General Pierce. He was denounced for living in a State whose constitution excluded Catholics from office; though he was opposed to that clause of the Constitution, and had voted against it. For the first time, to my knowledge, the attempt was made to bring religion into the field of politics, in a presidential campaign, and it originated with those who are now active in getting up a furor of persecution against foreigners and Catholics. They had failed to win the united Catholic and foreign vote for General Scott, and they seem determined to be revenged on those whom they once so flatteringly besought. *It is natural to hate those before whom we have humiliated ourselves in vain.*

Mr. Seward, perhaps, has too much justice and consistency to join in so unrepugnant a movement. It was he who assailed the Know-Nothings, and not they him. The natural affinity for Free-Soil, as shown in other States, satisfies me that they would have united with him had he not spurned the association. He first threw down the gauntlet to them, and has come off victor in the contest. The charm of Know-Nothing invincibility was broken by the triumph of both Whig

and Democrat over them, and the order attempted to revenge itself by persecuting its own members. He can dictate his terms of accommodation with them, I have no doubt. The pretense that one great mission of the order is to put down anti-slavery, and especially William H. Seward, is sheer nonsense, and has been largely circulated, since the northern elections, to make the order popular in the South, and thus to foist into power there, as it has done in the North, the enemies of the Democratic party, and of this Democratic Administration. The Silver Greys of New York are anxious to defeat Seward to remove a rival of their own chief, even if they send a more dangerous man in his place.

Another reason of Mr. Seward's refusing to join the order, I doubt not, was that, with his sagacity, looking to ultimate success, he could not fail to see that the whole movement would be short-lived, and that when it ended, no political act, not even membership of the Hartford Convention, with its secret proceedings, could be more destructive to the prospects of a public man than to have avowed the principles of the order. You, sir, and I, we all know, that it is the almost universal opinion in political circles here, that this thing will have a brief day. The most anxious wet-nurses of the bantling hardly expect it to live through the presidential canvass of 1856. There is everywhere the most feverish anxiety among the faithful to secure some little official crumb of comfort before it is forever too late. Each longs to be carried into the pool while the waters are troubled, for the time of the troubling, they know full well, will soon be past, and then, where shall they be healed? Evidences of premature decay are already visible. It will vanish as suddenly as it arose, and leave scarcely a wreck behind. They feel the sandy foundation slipping from beneath their feet. They feel their sentence is pronounced each time they hear repeated the wise and tolerant doctrines of our religion, and which are grafted upon our Constitution. Blank annihilation stares them in the face. They see indignation and distrust without, discord and rebellion within. Their secrecy is betrayed and mocked, their intolerance despised, and their prestige broken.

Towns in Massachusetts over which the storm swept in November, have since had municipal elections, and those opposed to the order were open in their denunciation of it and of its principles, and, banding against it as against a common enemy, have defeated it. The organization of the order is better understood; its intolerance, even to its members, has too plainly manifested itself, and others have not hesitated to apply to the order those epithets bestowed upon the action of the New York council by the Brooklyn brethren, "ANTI-AMERICAN," "ANTI-REPUBLICAN," "MOST UNWARRANTABLE, ABOMINABLE, and DANGEROUS ASSUMPTION OF DESPOTIC POWER," in its "CONFESSIONAL, PENANCE, and THREATS of EXCOMMUNICATION, only equaled by the holy INQUISITION of SPAIN, and only worthy of imitation by the GRAND COUNCIL of CARDINALS at ROME."

I can but believe that the Brooklyn insurgents have used language which the deliberate judgment of the American people will adopt as their opinion of the character, the purposes, and the merits of the order, and this opinion will soon be both verdict and epitaph.

Were there no cause for the dissolution of the order in its principles, the discordant materials which compose it would soon precipitate its destruction. The ultra men already elected, agreeing in nothing but hostility to the South, to aliens, and to Catholics, can harmonize in no course of action, foreign or domestic, unless by the happening of a Whig majority in Congress, the tariff should be altered to suit the protectionist theory, or some other doctrine of that party be embodied in a law. If this order takes hold in the South, it will surprise both friends and opponents. It will be a matter of wonder why that section, suffering none of the hardships which are plead as an excuse for the order in the North, and from her institutions peculiarly averse to secret and irresponsible associations, should discard a long history of generous toleration to adopt the creed of proscription, and wear the name of an order which, in the northern States, has beaten down the defenders of the Constitution and State-rights, and inaugurated more fully than ever before, the era of consolidation and fanaticism.

In a crisis like the present, it becomes the Democratic party to remain steadfast to its old principles. In the "Act for establishing religious freedom," adopted in Virginia, in 1786, and originating in the benevolent mind of Mr. Jefferson, it was enacted that,

"No man shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burdened, in his body or goods, nor shall he otherwise suffer on account of his religious opinions or belief, but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument, to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same SHALL IN NOWISE DIMINISH, ENLARGE, OR AFFECT THEIR CIVIL CAPACITIES."

On this tolerant principle the Democratic party, through all the variety of disaster and success, has stood from that day to this. It has been the guardian of every civil and political right, of every individual, and of every section. No error has been too gigantic for its assault, no right too insignificant for its protection. When the rights of the States were in peril during the Federal administration of the elder Adams, it was the champion of our faith, Mr. Jefferson, who was foremost in their defense, resting their security upon principles as wise and venerable as the Constitution itself, and triumphantly sustained by the Democratic party. It was during his administration that the "alien and sedition laws," so violative of personal right, were effaced from the statute-book by the votes of the same Democratic party which it is now attempted to seduce into heresies more abominable than those which it then abolished. This new ism is the old "alien law," under a thin disguise; and these two, with "Native Americanism," are bodies into which the old unlauded spirit of Federalism has insinuated itself, hoping, under these forms, to obtain a favor which was always denied it when recognized. It is like Petruchio's nether wedding garment, "a thrice-turned pair of old breeches," betraying the nakedness it was intended to conceal.

The integrity and respectability of the Democratic party have been sustained by adhering to the great constitutional doctrines which it inculcated, and refusing under all circumstances, to ally itself with the temporary isms, which the Whig party has so readily affiliated with, and which have resulted in its corruption, and almost

in its destruction. Though defeated at the North, in the late elections, those who stood by their principles through that arduous struggle, are men whose devotion to truth is beyond suspicion, and who, aided by a few thousand of their old friends, whom the excitement and the deceptions of the hour have misled, will soon bear the ancient flag triumphant through that section, and reinstate their old principles, and their true men. Is it wiser for the South to trust this new organization, for the just interpretation of the Constitution, on which her rights, and those of the whole Union, depend, or that old party which, even when defeated by desperate factions, has always possessed a large body of faithful men, and who are now in a minority only because they are devoted to the Constitution and the rights of the States?

We know that this order is hostile to principles

which the party have ever cherished. We know that it is a formidable machine in the hands of ambitious men to defeat this Administration, which stands as a bulwark for the just rights of the States, and the people, against every form of persecution and fanaticism. We know that under its banner are arrayed those who, for a quarter of a century, have been the enemies of the Constitution and national peace; that against it are opposed those whom we have ever cherished as our friends, and the true friends of the Union—whom fanaticism has reviled and persecuted, and who, under every adversity, have stood by the rights of the States and of the citizens of every State. It will create no surprise that we adhere to old friends who have proven faithful, rather than trust ancient enemies, who do not conceal their aversions even while they solicit our confidence.

